A Summary Description of the Prayer of the Prophet, Peace be upon Him

Prepared by:
Mohammed Nasir-uddin Al-Albani

Translated by:
Mohammed Said Dabas

Edited by:
Dr. Zuhair Ahmad Maqbool

مختصر صفة صلاة النبي ﷺ

باللغة الإنكليزية

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

A Word About this Book

This book aims at explaining the prayers of the Prophet, Peace be upon Him, PBUH, from inception to the end, as one may view it.

It is meant to be simple, precise and candid.

It is not meant to adhere to any opinion or represent any specific major school of thought.

The author has attempted to collect all authentically documented Hadith, statement of Allah's Apostle, PBUH dealing with the topic from various original sources, such as manuscripts and printed books of Hadith and Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence).

Each and every point presented in this book is based on sound Hadiths or reported actions of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.

It is hoped that this book is of benefit to both beginners in the Islamic faith, as well as, to enable veteran Muslims to follow what had been truly practiced by Allah's Apostle, PBUH. Prayer is one of the major and essential pillars of Islam that each and every Muslim must fulfill on a daily basis.

Bismil-lahir-Rahmanir-Rahim
In the Name of Allah,
the Beneficent, Most Merciful

Introduction

All Praise is truly due to Allah, the Almighty. We all praise Him, seek His help and ask His Forgiveness. We seek refuge with Him from the evil of our souls, and the protection from errors and wrong doing. He whom Allah, the Almighty guides, nothing or no one will be able to misguide. And he whom Allah, the Almighty misguides, no one or nothing will be able to guide. I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship, but Allah, The Almighty alone, and I bear witness openly that Mohammed, PBUH is truly His slave servant and messenger.

This is an attempt to summarize the book entitled: "The Descriptions of Allah's Prophet Prayer, PBUH from the Beginning (Takbir) to the End (the Greetings) as You May Imagine it." I hope and pray Allah, the Almighty to render it useful to the general person in this format.

I have inserted some extra items which are not found in the original text. These are some explanations of certain terms or phrases for the benefit of beginners. Also, special emphasis was placed on some Hadiths or specific supplications and invocations at particular points in the prayer.

Main headings and many other sub-headings were used for the text, in addition to, serial numbers for many important and pertinent acts of the prayer.

Each act of the prayer was categorized as essential (Rokn) or obligatory (Wajib). Acts which were not categorized are automatically considered traditional acts (Sunnah). Some of the uncategorized acts, however, may fall under the obligatory category, but is listed in one of the two previous categories is an unscientific method. This is due to the lack of substantial evidence from the Sunnah itself.

The essential act of the prayer is an act, which if not performed duly, renders the prayer incomplete. An example of this is bowing down (Ruku) in prayer. If one fails to perform this one act, the prayer is invalid.

The conditional or prerequisite act (Shart) in a prayer is very similar to the previous act, but not necessarily related to it physically. An example of this is performing ablution prior to starting a prayer. No prayer is valid if one does not perform ablution before joining, entering, holding or commencing a prayer.

The obligatory (Wajib) act in a prayer is the act declared specifically either in the Holy Quran or in the Sunnah of Allah's Apostle, PBUH. He who performs such an act shall be rewarded, and he who does not, shall be punished. A person with a valid excuse is exempt. An illustrative example is the obligatory (Fardh) and essential act of the prayer. Other current definitions of wajib are, in fact, new dimensions of thought stemming from new terminology of jurisprudence. These lack support of evidence or proof from the sunnah of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.[1]

[1] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

The Sunnah or traditions of Allah's Apostle, PBUH are common acts, particularly acts of worship, performed by the Prophet, PBUH on a regular basis, or frequently, throughout his life. He, PBUH did not command the Muslims to follow his acts strictly, but those performing these acts of emulation will be rewarded. Those not maintaining these acts will not be punished.

In a statement sometimes attributed to the Prophet, PBUH, it is stated: "He who leaves my practices will not be covered by my intercession." Although this statement was adopted by certain schools of thought, it is a hadith with no sound foundation or base and should not be attributed to the Prophet, PBUH due to yet another hadith: "Let him who attributes to me something which I have not said, take his seat in the hell-fire."

Obviously, I have not followed or sided with any of the four well-known schools of thought throughout this entire work. I simply follow the pattern of the hadiths. This pattern, is, indeed, the most sound, reassuring and candid. In fact, this pattern has been praised by some well-known scholars of the Hanafi school, namely Abu-l-Hasan Al-Laknawi, who said: "Following schools of thought of those who follow the hadith are the true inheritors (of knowledge) of the Prophet, PBUH, and the actual representatives of him, PBUH is much wiser than adhering to the opinion of someone else. May Allah, the Almighty resurrect us with this group and let us die on the same fate."

Additionally, Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, the well-known Muslim scholar stated in the following verses of poetry:

The religion of Allah's Apostle, PBUH is but a collection of documented news. It is best for one to follow these documents.

One must not accept anything else other than Hadith and those who reported it as a guide. One's own opinion is like the darkness of the night, while the hadith is like daylight.

The Author,
Mohammed Nasir-uddin Al-Albani
Damascus, Syria
Safar 26, 1392

I. Directing One's Face to the Glorious Shrine of K'abah

1. A Muslim must direct his face in the direction of Ka'bah as he intends to offer prayer anywhere and any type whether it be obligatory prescribed prayer (Fardh) or any voluntary prayer. This is one of the requisites of prayer. Prayer is rendered invalid if this act is not fulfilled.

2. A Muslim warrior who is fighting a battle is not required to fulfill this act when he offers a prayer under fear of surprise attack or when he is engaged in battle.

Similarly, a physically disabled person who cannot fulfill this act due to severe illness, or the person riding in a car, ship or plane and may miss prayer, may over-look this act.

Also a person offering a voluntary prayer while riding in any kind of vehicle may over-look this act. It is preferable, however, to direct one's face in the direction of K'abah before commencing prayer of this kind, carrying on with the prayer, whatever direction the vehicle may turn.

3. All Muslims praying near the Glorious shrine K'abah must direct their faces, when offering prayer, to the front side of the K'abah. Those who are not near the K'abah must direct their faces in prayer to the actual direction of K'abah.

Prayer in a Direction Other than K'abah by Mistake:

4. If the sky is cloudy, and one turns his face to the direction of K'abah on the basis of his best knowledge and perception, his

prayer is valid and needs not to be re-offered even if his direction was incorrect.

5. If anyone praying is approached by a reliable person suggesting the correct direction of prayer, one must immediately accept and turn to the correct direction. One's prayer in this case will remain valid.

II. Qiyam (Standing During Prayer)

6. The person offering prayer must observe obligatory standing (Qiyam). This is also an essential act of prayer, unless one is offering a prayer of fear or offering prayer during heavy and continuous fight on the battlefield. In this case, a Muslim may offer his prayer while riding in his vehicle. Similarly, a sick person who cannot stand may offer prayer while sitting. If an ill person cannot even sit down to offer prayer, then one is allowed to offer his prayer while lying down. As for a person offering any voluntary prayers, he may choose to pray while standing, riding or even sitting. In such a case, he may nod (signal with his head) up and down for both positions of bowing (Ruku') or prostration (Sujud).[1] One restraint must be observed. The prostration nod must be lower than the bowing nod. Similarly, a sick person who cannot offer prayer standing, must do the same.

7. The person offering prayer while sitting may not place any object in front of himself upon which to prostrate, such as a chair or a stool.[2] He is permitted to make his prostration position a

[1] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

[2] Ibid.

little lower than bowing if one cannot prostrate reaching the ground with the forehead.

Offering Prayer on a Ship or Plane:

8. Obligatory prayer may be offered on either a ship or a plane.

9. The person offering prayer may sit if one fears falling down if prayer offered in the standing position.

10. The person offering prayer may lean on a cane or other device in order to stand up properly while offering prayer due to old age or weakness due to illness.

Combining Positions, Sitting and Standing, While Offering Prayer:

11. A Muslim may offer voluntary prayer during the night (tahajjud) while either standing or sitting. One may combine the two forms. One may offer prayer while sitting and reciting. However, one must stand up shortly before bowing to finish his recitation while standing, then bow down and prostrate normally. This may also be repeated in the second Rak'ah as well.

12. The person offering prayer while sitting may sit with legs crossed or any other position deemed comfortable or suitable.

Offering Prayer with Shoes:

13. A Muslim may offer prayer barefooted or wearing shoes.

14. It is better to wear shoes for one prayer and take them off for another prayer. One must not feel obligated to adhere strictly to one opinion or the other.

15. A person who offers prayers without shoes, should not place the shoes to the right side, rather he should place the shoes to the left side or between the feet. This is the documented and authenticated position of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.[1]

Offering Prayer on the Pulpit:

16. The leader of a prayer (Imam) may offer prayer while standing on an elevated place, such as a pulpit, in order to teach. He may recite the Glorious Quran, bow while standing on the pulpit, then step backwards to perform prostration at the base of the pulpit. He may return again to the top of the pulpit to complete his speech.

Offering Prayer Close to a Barrier:

17. The person offering prayer must face a barrier, whether the prayer is done inside or outside a Mosque. This applies to all Muslims regardless of age. This is based on the Hadith (traditions of the Prophet, PBUH): "Do not offer prayer except to a barrier. Do not let anyone pass in front of you. If someone trying to pass in front of you refuses to yield, fight with this person, as he is surely accompanied by Satan."

[1] This suggests that one must not place the shoes in front of himself during prayer.

18. The person offering prayer do so as close as possible to a barrier in compliance with the command of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.

19. Allah's Apostle, PBUH once left a space equal to the distance of a passing sheep between his prostration point and the wall which he was using as a barrier. Therefore, this measure of space sets the limits of closeness for the barrier.[1]

The Height of the Barrier of Prayer:

20. The barrier used by a Muslim in prayer must be at least one to two hand lengths from the ground. This is based on the Hadith: "One may offer prayer (in an open place)[2] if one places something similar in height to a camel saddle. In this case, one may not pay attention to anything within his sight."

21. The person offering prayer must direct himself towards the barrier, not turning to the left or the right. Nothing other than this has been neither documented nor authenticated from Allah's Apostle, PBUH.

22. Permissible barriers to which prayer may be offered include a stick or cane pushed into the ground, a tree, a pillar, a pole, even one's wife provided that she is sleeping in her bed covered

[1] Therefore, all Muslims who offer prayer in the middle of an open place without using a barrier, such as a wall, a post, a pillar or otherwise, are unaware of this practice of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.

[2] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

with a blanket or other cover, or an animal that one mounts, such as a camel or other animal.

Praying to Tombs or Graves is Unlawful (Forbidden):

23. Offering prayer to a tomb or a grave is unlawful and forbidden regardless of whether the tomb is of a Prophet or a common man.

Passing in Front of a Person Offering Prayer is Unlawful (Forbidden), even in the Glorious Mosque of Makkah:

24. It is unlawful or forbidden to pass in front of a person offering prayer even in a mosque, which includes the sacred mosque of Makkah. This is based on the Hadith: "Had the person wanting to pass in front of a person offering prayer knew (the grievous sin he commits),[1] he would stand for "forty" rather than pass in front of a person and the barrier placed to offer prayer.[2]

[1] Ibid.

[2] In one Hadith, it is stated "that Allah's Apostle, PBUH offered prayer at the "shoulder of the circumambulation" place while people passed in front of him, PBUH." This Hadith is not documented and authenticated. Additionally, there is no reference made that the people were not passing in front of the place of the Prophet's, PBUH prostration.

Preventing People from Passing in Front of You While Offering Prayer, Even in the Sacred Glorious Mosque of Makkah:

25. The person offering prayer with a barrier must (attempt) to prevent any person from passing between himself and the barrier. This is based in the Hadith stated earlier (item #17).

Another Hadith stating this duty from Allah's Apostle, PBUH: "One must (seek) a barrier to separate him from other people when offering prayer. If anyone intends to pass in front of him, he must push the other person as much as possible." One report stated: "Forbid (twice) the person trying to pass. If the person trying to pass refuses to turn away and take another path, the person praying must fight (push) him as if the person passing where but a Satan "

Moving Forward to Prevent a Person from Passing in Front of You While Praying:

26. The person offering prayer is permitted to move one or more steps forward in an attempt to prevent a person or an animal from passing in front of him.

Things That Interrupt Prayer:

27. The importance of a barrier is to prevent others from passing in front of the praying person, thus nullifying and rendering the prayer invalid. A person not placing a barrier in front of himself while offering prayer will render his pray invalid if an (adult) women, a donkey or a black dog passes in front of him.

III. Declaring Intention

28. The person intending to offer prayer must declare his intention to do so. One must assert expressively which prayer he intends to offer, such as Thohr, Asr or another prayer. It is not necessary to say the intention in words as this contradicts the Sunnah of Allah's Apostle, PBUH. None of the scholars of the various schools of thought advocated this act.

IV. Takbeer (Saying "Allah-u-Akbar")

29. The person offering prayer must start prayer saying the statement Allah-u-Akbar (Allah is the Greatest). This act is one of the essential acts of the prayer and is based upon the Hadith: "The key of prayer is cleanliness (ablution). Forbidding someone to engage any other act while praying is done by saying Allah-u-Akbar. And making one free to do as he likes is by saying the phrase "As-salaamu 'Alaikum wa Rahmatul-lah" (Peace be unto you)."

30. The person offering prayer must not say Allah-u-Akbar in aloud or raised voice unless he is leading others in prayer.

31. It is permissible for a second person to restate the phrase Allah-u-Akbar which is said by the person leading the prayer (Imam) in a low voice (if the congregation is large and no loud speaker or intercom system is installed)[1] or in case of illness or weakness of the Imam.

[1] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

32. The person following the Imam in prayer must not say Allah-u-Akbar until the Imam completes his recitation.

Raising the Hands and the Correct Method:

33. The person offering prayer may raise his hands before and after saying the phrase Allah-u-Akbar. Both cases are authentic and reported of Allah's Apostle, PBUH.

34. The person offering prayer may raise both hands stretching the fingers.

35. The person offering prayer may raise his hands up to the shoulders. At times, one may exaggerate this act and reach the tips of his fingers to the ear lobes (although this exaggeration is not necessary).[1]

Placing the Hands and the Correct Method:

36. The person offering prayer must place his right hand over the left hand after saying Allah-u-Akbar. This is the Sunnah and was a practice commended by Allah's Apostle, PBUH and the companions, RAA. Therefore, letting the hands hang by the sides of the body is not permissible.

37. The person offering prayer must place his right hand over the back of the left hand along the wrist and the forearm.

Ibid.

38. A person offering prayer may, sometimes, hold the left hand with the right hand.[1]

Where to Place the Hands:

39. The person offering prayer may place his hands over his chest. This applies to both males and females.

40. The person offering prayer may not place his right hand over his hip (side of his body).[2]

41. The person offering prayer must be alert, attentive and feeling humility. One must avoid things that may distract from concentration on prayer. One must not offer prayer in the presence of food that he may like. One must not also offer prayer under pressure of withholding urine or feces.

42. The person offering prayer must look down towards the place of prostration while in the standing position.

43. The person offering prayer should not move or turn to the left or the right, as this is a theft of the prayer by Satan.

[1] There is no authentic and documented statement of Allah's Apostle, PBUH to support the claim of those who perform both acts at once, i.e. placing the right over the left hand and holding it simultaneously.

[2] Placing the hands in places other than the chest either is a weak report of the acts of Allah's Apostle, PBUH or has no basis whatsoever.

44. The person offering prayer must not raise his sight to the sky.

Opening (Commencement) Supplication:

45. The person offering prayer must begin the prayer by reciting some of the documented supplications of Allah's Apostle, PBUH. There are many popular supplications reported from Allah's Apostle, PBUH for opening the prayer. The following is one of the supplications maintained and recommended by the Prophet, PBUH: "Sub-hanak-a All-ahum-ma wa bi hamdika, wa tabar-raka-ismoka, wa T'Ala-jad-doka wa-la-ilaha ghairoka" (Oh Allah! Glory is due to You. All praise is due to You. Blessed is Your Name. Best is Your Fortune. There is no god, but You.)

V. Recitation

46. The person offering prayer must first seek refuge with Allah, the Almighty as an obligatory act. A person neglecting this act would be committing a sin.

47. It is a Sunnah occasionally to say: "'Authu bil-lahi min-ash-shaitan-ir-rajim min-hamzihi, wa nafkhihi wa nafthihi" (I seek refuge with Allah, the Almighty from the cursed Satan, from the blink of his eye and his whispers).

48. The person offering prayer may occasionally say the following supplication: "'Authu bil-lahi-sami'-il-'alim min ash-shaitan ir-rajim...." (I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing from the cursed Satan).

49. Following the above, the person offering prayer must say, in a whispering voice: "Bis mil-lah ir-rahman ir-rahim (In the name

of Allah, the Beneficent, Most Merciful). This is repeated in this fashion whether or not the prayer is said aloud or not.

The Recitation of Fatiha, the Opening Chapter of the Glorious Quran:

50. The Person who is offering prayer must recite Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Glorious Quran. Fatiha must be recited completely. The phrase, "Bis mil-lah ir-rahman ir-rahim (In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, Most Merciful) is considered part of the Fatiha. This act is considered essential making it mandatory for those who do not know or speak Arabic, to memorize Fatiha in Arabic for this recitation.

51. If the person offering prayer cannot recite Fatiha in Arabic, for one reason or another, it would suffice him to repeat the following phrases until such time as Fatiha can be memorized in Arabic: "Sobhan Allah, al-hamdu lil-lah, lailaha il-la-Allah, la-hawla wala-quw-wata il-la bil-lah" (All glory is due to Allah, the Almighty; All praise is due to Allah, the Almighty; There is no deity worthy of worship but Allah, the Almighty; There is neither might nor power, except with Allah, the Almighty).

52. It is Sunnah to recite the Fatiha verse by verse. It is recommended to pause at the end of each verse. For example, one should recite "Bis mil-lah ir-rahman ir-rahim" and pause for a moment, then recite "Al-humdu lil-lahi rab-bil 'alamin" and pause again, and so forth. Allah's Apostle, PBUH recited Fatiha during prayer in this fashion. In fact, Allah's Apostle, PBUH recited all of the Glorious Quran in this fashion.

53. It is permissible while offering prayer to say "Malik" (the King), instead of"Ma-alik" (the Owner) in the Fatiha.

Recitation of Fatiha by a Person Following an Imam in Prayer:

54. The person following an Imam in prayer may recite Fatiha to himself in a low voice right after the recitation of the Imam during the Thohr (noon) and the Asr (afternoon) prayers. As of the other prayer which are recited out loud, if the person following could not hear the Imam and his recitation, he may recite Fatiha in a low voice. At times, some Imams pause for a few moments after finishing their recitation of Fatiha giving a chance for those following him to recite it quickly. This manner, however, has no authentic documentation in the Sunnah.[1]

Recitation after Completion of Fatiha:

55. It is Sunnah to recite another chapter (or portion thereof)[2] of the Glorious Quran while offering all types of prayers including, but not limited to the Janazah or funeral prayer. The is done during the first two Rak'ahs of prayer.

56. The person offering prayer may choose to recite long or short chapters of the Glorious Quran during his prayer. One may cut short or abbreviate his recitation due to certain reasons, such as illness, travel or a crying baby (child).

57. Recitation of the Glorious Quran may vary from one prayer to another. For instance, recitation during Fajr (morning) prayer

The documentation of the claims of such people was discussed at length in the series "Weak Hadiths", Nos. 546,7.

This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

should be longer than any of the other prayers. Recitation of the Thohr, Asr, Maghrib and Isha prayers then should be shorter.

58. Recitation during the voluntary prayer at night (Tahaj-jud) may be longer than all other prayers.

59. It is Sunnah to make the recitation of the first Rak'ah longer than the recitation of the second Rak'ah.

60. Recitation of the third and fourth Rak'ah should be shorter than half of the first and the second Rak'ah.

Recitation of Fatiha in each Rak'ah of Prayer:

61. Fatiha must be recited in each and every Rak'ah of prayer.

62. Recitation of other chapters in the third and fourth Rak'ah of prayer is also encouraged at times.

63. An Imam must not lengthen the prayer over the limit set by Allah's Apostle, PBUH in accordance with this Sunnah practices. An elongated prayer may be difficult for the Imam's followers. Among them, there may be old persons, ill persons, nursing mothers or others in a hurry due to important matters.

Recitation of the Glorious Quran Out Loud and in a Low Voice:

64. The person offering prayer must recite the Glorious Quran out loud during Fajr (early morning), Jum'ah (Friday), Eid (holiday), Istisqa (rain), Kosuf (eclipse) prayers, as well as, the first two Rak'ah of the Maghrib (early evening) and Isha (evening) prayers.

VI. Ruku (Bowing) in Prayer

69. During prayer, upon completing the recitation of the Glorious Quran, one must pause slightly to normalize his breath.

70. The person offering prayer, should raise both hands to the level of the shoulders upon standing up from Ruku (bowing). This action is similar to the act of raising of the hands when entering prayer.

71. The person offering prayer, then must say "Allah-u-Akbar. This is an obligatory act during prayer.

72. The next step in prayer is Ruku. It should be performed in such a manner that the entire body remains firm and motionless. All parts of the body must be in the appropriate position and not moving. This is an essential act of prayer.

How to Bow in Ruku:

73. The person offering prayer must place both hands tightly on the knees, spreading the fingers as if holding the knees. All of the above acts are essential acts in prayer.

74. The person offering prayer must stretch, making the back level while bowing down in Ruku. This is an essential act of prayer.

75. The person offering prayer must neither lower nor raise the head. The head should be level with the back while bowing down.

76. The person offering prayer must point his elbows outward.

77. The person offering prayer must say, three times, during Ruku, "Sob-hana rab-bi al-'Atheem" (Glorified be Allah, the Great).[1]

Equalizing the Duration is One of the Essential Acts of Prayer:

78. It is the Sunnah practice to equalize the duration of all the essential acts of prayer. One must attempt to set equal proportions between the duration of each act so that the entire prayer becomes acceptable in performance. One's prostration (Sujud), as well as, sitting between Sujud must be close in length to each other.

79. It is not permissible to recite the Glorious Quran during Ruku and Sujud.

Getting up after Bowing (Ruku):

80. After finishing Ruku, one must stand up again. This is an essential act of prayer.

81. While getting up after Ruku, one must say "Samia' Allahu li-man Hamidah" (Allah, the Almighty hears who praises Him). This is an essential act of prayer.

82. The person offering prayer must raise his hands again to the level of the shoulders as at the beginning of prayer.

[1] Other supplications may be said in this position. Some are long, others are moderate, while still some others are short. For more details, refer to the book entitled: "The Description of Prayer."

83. The person offering prayer must then stand so that all parts of the body return to their original position prior to Ruku. This is an essential act of prayer.

84. While standing after Ruku, one must say: "Rab-bana wa Lakal-hamd (Oh, our Lord! To You belongs all Praise).[1] This supplication is an essential act of prayer and must be repeated by every person offering prayer whether it is the Imam or the followers.[2]

85. The length of the standing must be equivalent and conforming to the other acts of prayer as explained earlier.

VII. Prostration (Sujud) in Prayer

86. The person offering prayer must say "Allah-u-Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest). This is an essential act of prayer.

87. The person offering prayer may, at times, raise his hands to the level of the shoulders.

Falling on the Hands First:

88. The person offering prayer may place his hands on the ground before the knees. This act is a well-documented command from Allah's Apostle, PBUH. He, PBUH forbid people

[1] Ibid.

[2] Holding the hands on the chest while standing after Ruku is not necessary as no documented report of Allah's Apostle, PBUH can be found for confirmation.

to emulate the act of the camel which falls down on its knees (of its front legs) first before reclining or sitting.[1]

89. While in Sujud, it an essential act of prayer to place the palms of both hands (firmly) on the ground.[2]

90. (While in Sujud), the fingers (of both hands) must be close to each other.

91. (While in Sujud), the fingers (of both hands) must be pointed in the direction of Qiblah (the direction of Makkah and the Ka'bah).

92. While in Sujud, the hands must be placed at the level of the shoulders.

93. It is permissible for the person offering prayer to place the hands, occasionally, higher than the level of the shoulders.

94. (While in Sujud), the elbows must be lifted off the ground. This is an essential act of prayer. Care must be taken not to emulate the act of the dog who places the arm and the elbow on the ground when sitting.[3]

95. (While in Sujud), both the forehead and the nose must be placed firmly on the ground. This an essential act of prayer.

[1] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

96. (While in Sujud), both the knees must be well placed firmly on the ground.

97. (While in Sujud), the tips of the toes on both feet must also be placed firmly on the ground.

98. (While in Sujud), both feet must also be placed on the ground in an upright position. These are all essential acts of prayer.

99. (While in Sujud), the tips of the toes must be directed towards Qiblah (the direction of prayer).

100. (While in Sujud), the heels of both feet must be close together.

Conformation of All Parts of the Body During Sujud:

101. The person offering prayer must depend equally on the seven parts of the body that touch the ground during Sujud. These parts are the forehead, the nose, both palms of the hands, both knees and the tips of the toes of both feet.

102. The person offering prayer in such a manner will attain a state of calmness. Calmness during Sujud is an essential act of prayer.

103. (While in Sujud), the following phrase must be said three times: "Sob-hana Rab-bi-al-'Athim" (All glory is due to my Lord, the Greatest).

104. It is highly recommended that the person offering prayer to invoke Allah, the Almighty as much as possible while in Sujud. Sujud is the most opportune point for acceptance of supplications.

105. The person offering prayer must attempt to make the duration of Ruku and Sujud comparable, as explained earlier.

106. Placing the forehead on the ground during Sujud is permissible on the bare ground, cloth, carpet, prayer mat or other similar items.

107. The person offering prayer may not recite any portion of the Glorious Quran while in Sujud.

108. The person offering prayer must raise the head saying "Allah-u-Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest). This is an essential act of prayer.

109. It is permissible, on occasion, to raise the hands up to the level of the shoulders after Sujud.

110. One must sit calmly so that all the parts of the body return to their original position prior to the second Sujud. This is an essential act of prayer.

111. (While sitting following Sujud), a person must sit with the left foot beneath himself. This is an essential act of prayer.

112. (While sitting following Sujud), a person must place his right foot in an upright position with the toes touching the ground.

113. (While sitting following Sujud), a person should attempt to direct the toes of the right foot in the direction of Qiblah.

114. (While sitting following Sujud), it is also permissible to sit, on occasion, on the heels of the feet.

115. While sitting in this position, it is recommended that the person offering prayer say: "Allahum-ma ighfir-li, war hamni, waj-

borni, war-f'ani, wa 'afini, war-zoqni" (Oh Allah! Forgive me, be merciful to me, help me, honor me, cure me and increase my provisions).

116. (While sitting in this position), it is also permissible to say: "Allahum-ma ighfir-li" (Oh Allah! Forgive me).

117. The duration of this sitting position should be approximately equal to the duration of the Sujud.

The Second Sujud (Prostration):

118. (At this point), the person offering prayer must say "Allah-u-Akbar" (Allah is the Greatest). This is an essential act of prayer.

119. (At this point), it is permissible to raise the hands to the level of the shoulders, on occasion, when saying "Allah-u-Akbar".

120. Next, the person offering prayer must perform the second Sujud. This is an essential act of prayer.

121. Performance of the second Sujud must be exactly the same as the first Sujud.

Sitting at Rest:

122. The words "Allah-u-Akbar" must be said upon rising from the second Sujud. This is an essential act of prayer.

123. (At this point), it is permissible to raise the hands to the level of the shoulders, on occasion, when saying "Allah-u-Akbar".

124. During the performance of this act, it is suggested to sit briefly on the left foot so that every part of the body gets back to its original position (prior to entering into Sujud).

125. When the person offering prayer gets up from the second Rak'ah, both fists must be placed on the ground as done in kneading dough. This is an essential act of prayer.

126. The exact process of the first Rak'ah is to be repeated.

127. However, the person offering prayer must not repeat the opening supplication made earlier.

128. The person offering prayer must strive to make the second Rak'ah shorter than the first Rak'ah.

Sitting to Recite "Tashah-hud" (Declaration of Faith):

129. Upon completion of the second Rak'ah, the person offering prayer must sit to recite "Tashah-hud" (Declaration of Faith). This is an essential act of prayer.

130. The person offering prayer must sit in the same fashion as between the two Sujuds.

131. (At this point), it is not permissible to place the back of the feet on the ground and sitting on the heels.

132. The person offering prayer must place the right hand on the right thigh and knee without allowing the elbow to extend beyond the thigh or point outward in the direction of another person.

133. The person offering prayer must place the left hand on the left thigh and knee, in the same fashion as the right hand.

134. It is not permitted for one to depend on one's hand and especially the left one in this case.

Moving the Right Index Finger and Looking at It:

135. The person offering prayer, must join the fingers of the right hand making a fist with the middle finger touching the tip of the thumb.

136. On occasion, it is permissible to make a circle with the middle finger and the thumb (of the right hand).

137. The index finger of the right hand must be pointed towards the direction of Qiblah.

138. The person offering prayer must look down at the index finger of the right hand (in this position).

139. The person offering prayer must move the right index finger up and down during the entire session of sitting for "Tahshah-hud".

140. (At this point), the person offering prayer must not point the left index finger.

141. The same process should be repeated every time one sits for "Tashah-hud".

The Format for Offering "Tashah-hud" and Supplications:

142. Reciting "Tashah-hud" is an essential act of prayer. If the person offering prayer forgets, it is required to perform two Sujuds of forgetfulness.

143. Recitation of "Tashah-hud" must be performed in a low voice.

144. The format of "Tashah-jud" is as follows: "At-tahy-yatu lil-lahi was sala-wat wa tay-yibatu as-salamu alaika ay-yuhan nabiyu wa rahma-tul-lahi wa barakatuh. As-salami 'alaina wa 'ala 'ibad-il-lahis salihin. Ash-hadu al-la ilaha-il-l-Allah, wa ash-hadu an-na Mohammadan 'abdoho was Rasul-uhu". (All beautiful greetings and praise is due to Allah, the Almighty. May the peace be upon the Prophet of Allah.[1] I bear witness that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, the Almighty. I bear witness openly that Mohammed is the slave servant of Allah, the Almighty.[2]

145. The above should be followed by "Salat-'ala-al-Nabi" (greetings of peace and blessings for the Prophet, PBUH): "Allahum-ma sal-li 'ala Mohammaden wa 'ala ali Mohammed, kama sal-laita 'ala Ibrahima wa 'ala ali Ibrahimin-naka hamidon majid. Allahuma-ma barik 'ala Mohammaden wa 'ala ali Mohammed, kama barak-ta 'ala Ibrahim wa 'ala ali Ibrahima in-naka hamidon majid". (Oh Allah! Grant peace to Mohammed and his family as You have granted peace to Abraham and his family. Oh Allah! Grant blessings unto Mohammed and his family as You have granted blessings unto Abraham and his family. You are indeed Most Glorified, Most Honorable).

This phrase was said after the death of Allah's Apostle, PBUH. This phrase also was authenticated and documented from Ibn Masud, Aishah, Ibn al-Zobair and Ibn Abbas. For more details, refer to the book entitled: "The Description of Prayer."

2 Ibid.

146. If a shorter form of the above is desired, the person offering prayer may say: "Allahum-ma sal-li 'ala Mohammaden wa 'ala ali Mohammed, kama sal-laita 'ala Ibrahima wa 'ala ali Ibrahima in-naka hamidon majid. Allahum-ma barik 'ala Mohammaden wa 'ala ali Mohammed, kama barak-ta 'ala Ibrahima wa 'ala ali Ibrahima in-naka hamidon majid."

147. Following the above, the person offering prayer may offer any supplication he wishes.

The Third and Fourth Rak'ah:

148. Next, the person offering prayer must say "Allah-u-Akbar". This is an essential act of prayer. It is Sunnah to say this phrase while still sitting.

149. (At this point), it is permissible to raise the hands to the level of the shoulders, on occasion, when saying "Allah-u-Akbar".

150. (At this point), the person offering prayer must stand and proceed with the performance of the third Rak'ah. This is an essential act of prayer.

151. All acts should be performed as in the previous Rak'ah.

152. Before standing for the fourth Rak'ah, it is recommended that the person offering prayer sits for a moment on the left foot until each part of the body returns to its original position.

153. The person offering prayer must get up, placing both fists on the ground, as is done when kneading dough as done previously.

154. (At this point), the person offering prayer must recite Fatiha in both the third and the fourth Rak'ah. This is an essential act of prayer.

155. (At this point), it is permissible to recite additional verses from the Glorious Quran if desired.

Special Supplications (Done While Standing During Prayer) for Particular Use During Difficulties or Trying Times:

156. It is Sunnah to offer special, lengthy supplications during prayer (in the standing position) in order to invoke the kind attention of Allah, the Almighty to remove a catastrophe, famine or some type of hardship upon the Muslim Ummah (nation).

157. This kind of supplication is made upon standing up from Ruku (after the last Rak'ah)[1] and after saying: "Oh Allah! All praise is due to You."

158. There is no specific supplication reported from Allah's Apostle, PBUH in such an occasion. It is permissible to use a supplication suited to the specific catastrophe, dilemma or difficult time.

159. The person offering prayer should raise both hands up to the chest with the palms of the hands facing the sky.

160. The Imam leading the prayer should raise his voice while offering this supplication (so that all can hear the supplication).

1 This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

161. Those offering prayer with an Imam on this occasion must respond with "Ameen" (Oh Allah! Accept our supplication) at every pause made by the Imam (in recitation of the supplication).

162. Upon completion of the supplication, the Imam should say: "Allah-u-Akbar" and proceed with Sujud.

The Place and Format of "Witr" (Odd Numbered Prayer After Isha Prayer) and "Qunut" (Supplication While Standing):

163. The supplication of the "Witr" prayer (prayer offered with odd numbers of Rak'ahs in the evening after Isha prayer) is permissible on occasion.

164. The person offering prayer should perform this (Witr) supplication before performing Ruku in contrast to "Qunut" (catastrophe supplication) (which is done after performing Ruku).

165. The following supplication is advised: "Allahum-ma ihdini fi man hadait. Wa 'afini fi man 'afait. Wa tawal-lani fi man tawal-lait. Wa barak li fi man 'atait. Wa qini shar-ra ma qadhait. Fa in-naka taqdhi wa la yoqdha 'alaik. Wa in-nahu la-yathil-li man walait, wa la-ya-'iz-zu man 'dait. Ta-bat-ak-ta rab-bana wa ta 'alait. La-manja minka il-la ilaik" (Oh Allah! Guide me among those whom You have guided. Cure me amongst those whom You have cured and pardoned. Befriend me amongst those whom You have befriended. Bless me with what You have provided. Protect me from evil things that are my destiny. You are my Judge and there is no judgement against You. Your friends will never be humiliated. Your enemies will never be dignified or honored. Blessed and Glorified be You. There is no escape but to You.

166. The precise wording of the above supplication were instructed by Allah's Apostle, PBUH, and therefore, should not be altered or changed. However, it is permissible to add Salat-'ala-al-Nabi (greetings and peace to the Prophet, PBUH) as was done by the companions of the Prophet, PBUH.

167. Upon completion of the supplication, Ruku is performed followed by Sujud as is routinely done.

The Final Sitting and the Recitation of the Declaration of Faith:

168. The person offering prayer then must sit and perform the final Tashahud (declaration of faith) as done following the first two Rak'ahs. Both acts are essential acts of prayer.

169. The person offering prayer must then perform all acts as done after the completion of the second Rak'ah.

170. The person offering prayer must sit with the left hip touching the ground with both feet in position on the right side placing the left foot under the right shin.

171. The person offering prayer should place the right foot in an upright position pointing the big toe in the direction of the Qiblah (if possible).

172. (At this point), it is permissible to lay the right foot flat on the ground, on occasion.

173. The person offering prayer must hold his left knee with the left hand in order to maintain this prescribed position.

Offering Greeting to the Prophet, PBUH and Seeking Refuge with Allah, the Almighty During the Final Sitting:

174. The person offering prayer must offer greeting and peace to Allah's Apostle, PBUH during this final sitting. Some forms of this greeting were outlined earlier.

175. The person offering prayer must seek refuge with Allah, the Almighty from the four evils by saying: "Allahum-ma in-na 'authu-bika min 'athabi jahan-nam, wa min 'atha-bil-qabr, wa min fitnat il-mahya wal-mamat, wa min shar-ri fitnat il-mashihid-dajjal" (Oh Allah! I seek refuge with You from the torture of the Hellfire, the torture of the grave, the afflictions of life, death and the evils, and the affliction of the false Messiah).

Supplications Before Ending Prayer:

176. The person offering prayer should offer supplications for himself on any subject (prior to the end of the prayer). It is advisable to use a supplication from the Glorious Quran or the Sunnah. If the person offering prayer does not know any specific supplications from these two sources, then it is acceptable to offer supplications in any form.

Offering the Greetings of "As-salamu 'Alaikum" in Ending the Prayer:

177. The person offering prayer, at this point, should offer greetings (to declare the end of the prayer)[1] by saying "As-

[1] This phrase is added by the translator for clarification of the original Arabic text.

salamu 'alaikum" (peace be unto you) while turning the face (as far as possible) to the right.

178. The person offering prayer, at this point, should offer greetings (to declare the end of the prayer)[1] by saying "As-salamu 'alaikum" (peace be unto you) while turning the face (as far as possible) to the left. This act must be performed even if offering the funeral (Janazah) prayer.

179. The Imam must raise his voice when saying "As-salamu 'alaikum", except if performing a Janazah prayer.

180. One of the following forms of greetings may be used (in ending the prayer):

a. "As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatul-lahi wa barakatuh" (May Allah's peace and blessings be unto you) should be said when turning the face to the right, followed by "As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatul-lahi" when turning the face to the left;

b. "As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatul-lah" when turning the face to the right and the left;

c. "As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatul-lahi" when turning the face to the right, followed only by "As-salamu 'alaikum" when turning the face to the left; or,

d. "As-salamu 'alaikum wa rahmatul-lahi wa barakatuh" while turning the face to the right side only.

Ibid.